

FACT SHEET

WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY



1800RESPECT is available for frontline workers and people with disability for information, referral and counselling.

1800RESPECT counsellors are trained in responding to people with disability and frontline workers.

Developed by 1800RESPECT in partnership with Professor Patsie Frawley and Deakin University.

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WHAT ARE THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER WHEN WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SADFV?

- LANGUAGE is a key consideration. Using the words and phrases that the person already uses where possible is a good way to build trust and ensure that communication is client led.
- TRAINING in disability awareness and on how to use resources can improve familiarity with and confidence to use a specialist resource. Training can also assist staff to develop skills to build trust, rapport and suitable communication strategies with people with disability. Staff who engage in disability awareness training report feeling more comfortable and confident to work with people with disability, than staff who have not received this type of training.
- CHOOSING CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE RESOURCES is important and can be more relatable for people with disability experiencing sexual assault, domestic and family violence (SADFV).
- SPECIALIST RESOURCES can also be useful for support staff, other advocates, family and friends. Sharing resources with people who are supporting the person experiencing SADFV can help communication access and provide guidance on how to use the resource can help people with disability to retain and use the information.

HOW DO I ENGAGE WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY?

If you are a person with disability or supporting a person with disability who has experienced violence and abuse, Sunny can support you to:

- Tell your story
- Understand what has happened
- Know your rights
- Find people who can help
- Understand what abuse is
- Learn about different types of abuse.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY INCLUDE:

- Enable the person to tell you about themselves in their own words
- Build rapport, which might take some time
- Use videos and stories
- Use a 'teach-back' approach eg 'Did I explain that well enough for you?'
- Use case studies, which include a variety of case examples
- Some people may want to invite a support worker to support them in their engagement with the SADFV service –negotiate this, taking into consideration confidentiality and privacy.

WHAT ARE IMPORTANT LANGUAGE TIPS FOR WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY?

Communication modes and approaches with people with disability should be tailored to each person.

Things to consider include the person's own experiences, culture, sexuality, and their own specific language and communication approaches, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC which may include using an iPad or voice generating device). For more information on language there are many resources available through peak Disability bodies across Australia such as this [Plain Language Fact Sheet](#) by Scope Australia.

